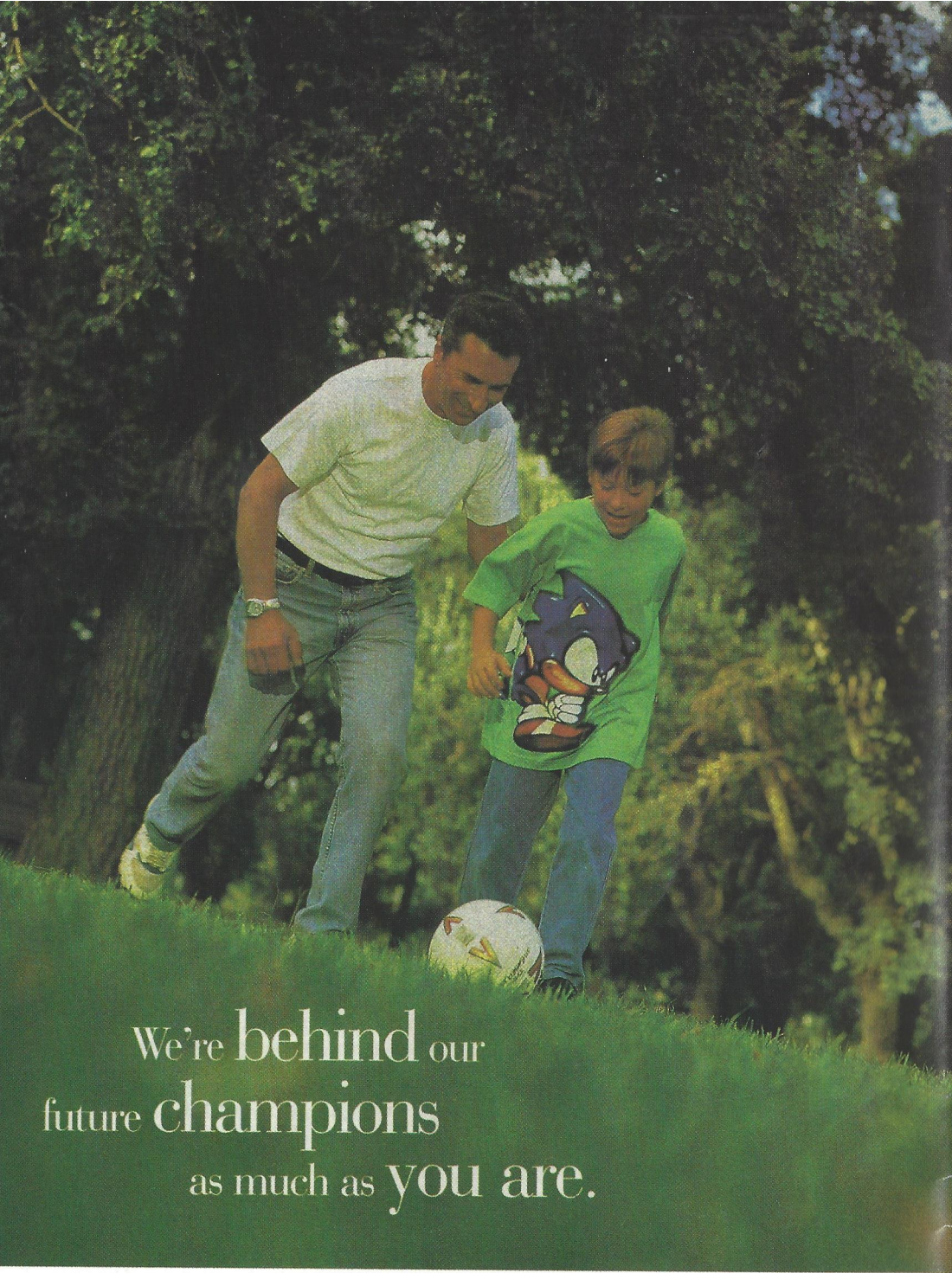




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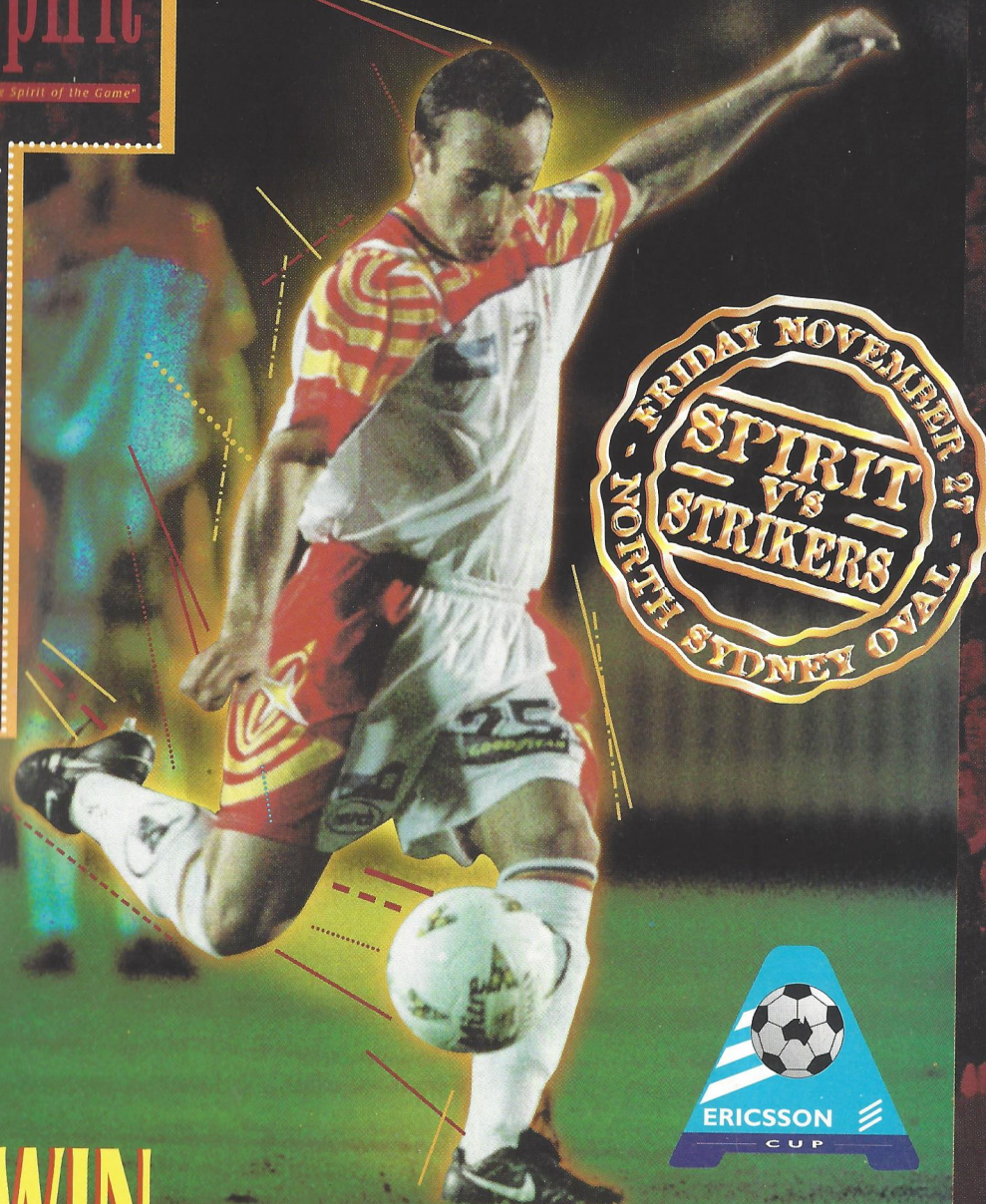
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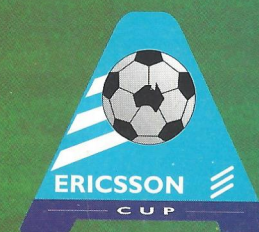
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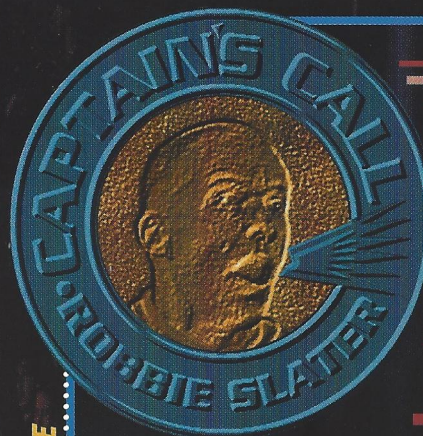
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SAY BYE BYE TO BYE

**BYE
UPSETS
OUR
RHYTHM**

We go into tonight's match after a week off and I must admit that I'm a little disappointed with the idea of a bye in the Ericsson Cup.

In no other country around the world do they have a bye in the premier competition, and it is hard to believe that there is not one more club in Australasia worthy of a place in the national competition.

Not many things have disappointed me since I arrived back in Australia but this is certainly one of them.

It hasn't made it any easier for us going into tonight's match with Brisbane Strikers.

Having a week off upsets the rhythm and tends to disrupt the focus which professional players require to perform at the elite level.

Now it is just like starting all over again.

Some people say that it gives players the opportunity to get over injuries but for us the majority of our injuries are long term so it made no difference to guys like Ian Crook, Tony Perinich, Troy Cranney and Scott Ollerenshaw.

I must applaud Northern Spirit for organising a practice match last weekend

against the Youth side as it allowed us to keep our touch and match fitness.

It was also a wonderful idea to allow the kids to come to North Sydney Oval and get close to the players.

It has been the main thing that has impressed me about this club. We are going out of our way to make everyone feel welcome and by doing that we are managing to sustain the interest in the club.

The kids in the crowd and the smiling faces make it all worthwhile when you come off the field.

Having two kids myself I understand the importance of giving our young fans something to look up to.

It gives the club a friendly, family atmosphere and it is so much more enjoyable as a player to have kids and families screaming and yelling support than intimidating fans screaming abuse.

I think it also gives us an edge over our competitors.

So limber up those vocal chords and get ready to cheer us home tonight as we prepare to send the Brisbane Strikers scurrying back over the border.

Enes has the Wander Lust!

Robbie Enes' liaison with the Northern Spirit seems destined to be brief - but he'll be no rat leaving a sinking ship when he departs to pick up the pieces of his career in Europe some time in the New Year.

The former Sydney United utility player is driven by the desire to join an elite core of Australians earning a living overseas, and expects to be showcasing his talents in either Holland or Germany within a matter of months.

With a flawed 12-month foray to England's Portsmouth already behind him, Enes' determination to prove he can keep step with the best remains unrelenting.

So too is his belief that the Spirit will put a tentative start to the season behind them and come of age in the second half of the season.

"I might not be here to see it but I'm positive once the side begins to gell and really play for one another they are certainties for the top six," he maintains.

"We haven't really been playing as a unified force, but the talent is there, so it's just a question of when rather than if it comes to stringing together results."

Enes, playing as a stop-gap sweeper in the absence of injured import Ian Crook, is wanted by a leading Dutch club.

And a mystery Bundesliga club are also reported to be interested in acquiring a player whose physical attributes are complemented by a delicate touch - rare in the defensive arts.

Enes was part of a four-strong Australian contingent brought to Pompey by former Socceroos boss Terry Venables.

He was joined at Fratten Park by John Aloisi, Zjelko Kalac and Craig Foster, with Aloisi the sole survivor under the new regime of former Southampton and Manchester City boss Allan Ball.



Enes was never able to establish himself in a struggling team, but he has no recriminations over a flawed journey of discovery.

"I actually miss England," Enes admits. "The life of a footballer there is so intense and the game gets so much coverage compared to here.

"I probably made a mistake in some respects joining Portsmouth, but they were the only team offering a concrete deal at the time.

"However, I learned from the experience and hopefully I'll be a lot wiser next time. I signed a three-year deal there and was fortunate to be able to negotiate my way out of it when things didn't work out. I've got a taste for playing abroad now and I want to continue my soccer education overseas.

"Playing in Holland or Germany certainly appeals. There's a chance I could stay with the Spirit until the end of the season, but at this stage it is impossible to say.

But, Enes remains impressed with the conditions at the Spirit.

"Australian soccer needs clubs like the Spirit to lift the profile of the game.

"Other clubs should try and follow suit. The way the club sells itself is amazing. They, along with the likes of Carlton and Perth are the future of the game in this country."

Injuries have stunted Enes' prospects over the past year and robbed him of a place in the World Cup qualifiers against Iran late last year.

And he is realistic about his immediate international prospects.

"I've got to get my club career sorted out before I can even think of playing for the Socceroos again," he concedes.

Player-coach Graham Arnold is in no hurry to see the back of his talented free agent.

"He's a quality player and obviously his departure will be a blow," he says. "He's been helping us and we've been helping him get used to first team football again."

And, Australia's loss looks like being Holland's gain.

NORTHERN SPIRIT NEXT GAME:

**Sunday Dec 6, 5.00pm v Sydney United
at Edensor Park (Delayed telecast Optus Vision)**

NORTHERN SPIRIT NEXT HOME GAME:

**Sunday December 27th 7.30pm,
v Gippsland Falcons at North Sydney Oval**

WATKINS GRADUATES WITH FLYING COLOURS

He gave the HSC a miss, but 18-year-old Daniel Watkins remains focused on studies of a very different nature.

The Northern Spirit FC apprentice has ditched the textbooks and calculators to become a graduate in the art of goalscoring at Professor Graham Arnold's finishing school.

And, after one Ericsson Cup match and five appearances as a substitute, the articulate kid from Concord is about to be given his chance to shoot straight to the top of his class.

With player-coach Arnold keen to withdraw his battle-fatigued frame from the national soccer league warzone, Watkins is poised for an extended run up front, beginning tonight against the Brisbane Strikers.

Though "astounded" at his ascension from the anonymity of the NSW Institute of Sport to first team football under Arnold's tutorship, Watkins possesses a self-assurance common to born goalscorers.

Call it confidence, call it arrogance Watkins has it.

A hat-ful of goals in pre-season trial games was followed by a stunning winning goal as a substitute against the Melbourne Knights in Round 4 - and there should be plenty more to come as he pursues his soccer education.

"I decided to defer the HSC when I won a Big Brother scholarship to Nottingham Forest earlier this year," he says.

"I wanted to give myself the chance to make the grade. I realise there is more to life than football and I'll get back to my

studies at some stage."

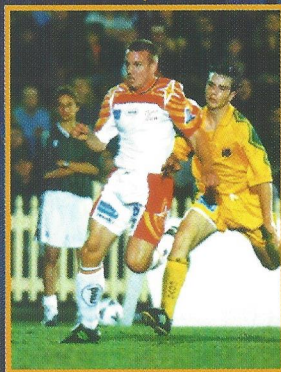
Blessed with a low centre of gravity, two good feet and kamikaze bravery, Watkins has all the hallmarks of a classic goalpoacher.

"Yes I do have the knack of popping up in the right place at the right time," he remarked.

Watkins has the honour of being the youngest player to appear in the national soccer league when he pulled on a strip for Melita Eagles at just 14 years, nine months of age.

And he realises the pressure is on now.

"I've scored a lot of goals in the pre-season games, now I've got to do it the next level up but I think I'm ready for a run in the first team.



"I realise there have been injuries to the likes of Tony Perinich, but I believe that if you're good enough your chance will always come.

"Now it's up to me to take it. I'm really flattered that Graham Arnold has placed so much faith in me."

Arnold agrees the time is right to give Watkins his chance.

"I've been nursing Daniel along for a while now and I believe it's time for him to show what he can do from the start instead of coming off the bench.

"I need to concentrate more on the coaching side of things, so this is Daniel's chance to impress. It's one thing coming on as a substitute -it's another getting out there from the start.

Watkins even has some words of solace for Clayton Zane, his goal-starved strike partner.

"I'm looking forward to linking up with him," he says. "I know he's going through a rough trot but once he gets his first goal I'm sure the

floodgates will open.

"We've been staying behind after training lately for extra shooting practice and I believe we can link up well together, though only time will tell.

"Clayton's been unlucky but he won't let it affect him. He's too good a player for that.

"As a team, we are still a fair way from reaching our potential. But the better we get to know each other, the better things will get."

Watkins, who suffers from more pre-game tension than a turkey at Christmas time,

relishes the release of the pent-up nervous energy once the action starts.

"I get terrible butterflies before matches as the apprehension kicks in," he admits. "But once I get out there it tends to dissipate, especially when we've got the superb North Sydney Oval crowd roaring us on.

"They have been amazing so far and are a big part of our success at home."

And hopefully Watkins will give the fans much more to cheer about.

Fans prove Spirit Park is the place to be!

Spirit extra proof that soccer is alive and well

DESPITE all of the bad publicity that soccer attracts, it always bounces back. The resilience of soccer, and the true level of the love people in Australia have of the game, has been shown again.

This phenomenon was evident during the sellout of the Ericsson Cup grand final two seasons ago at SunCorp Stadium, the incredible event of the decade at the MCG last November and the 20,000 plus crowd at Parramatta Stadium earlier this year to witness our Olympic team play Brazil.

Now, the phenomenon has been enriched. The introduction of Northern Spirit into the national soccer league has been a blessing and a breath of fresh air.

Their home games have drawn fantastic crowds with

a make-up of which I have not witnessed at club level before.

Mums, dads and kids of all ages sing, chant and clap over a two-hour period. The atmosphere is relaxed, fun and thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Even though I have attended many games at Marconi, some games at Olympic and a few games at Sydney United, I can't see myself going to any venue other than North Sydney Oval in future.

My kids absolutely love it. Keep up the magnificent work Graham Arnold and company.

Everyone should experience the Northern Spirit, so to all Sydneysiders, come and enjoy the feeling.

HARRY ROSS
Panania



Photos courtesy Joseph



Murphy Photography



Tel: (02) 9977 5395

Ericsson Cup Results at a glance

	Northern Spirit	Sydney Olympic	Perth Glory	Carlton	Melbourne Knights	Wollongong Wolves	Adelaide City	Brisbane Strikers	Sydney United	Canberra Cosmos	South Melbourne	Gippsland Falcons	Adelaide Sharks	Newcastle Breakers	Marconi Fairfield
Northern Spirit	•	0-2	0-2	2-1	2-1	1-0	0-2								
Sydney Olympic	2-0	•						2-1	1-4	5-0	1-3	0-0	1-4		
Perth Glory	2-0		•				1-0	2-2	3-1	5-1	2-1	3-0			
Carlton	1-2			•		4-0	4-1	0-1	1-2	3-0	4-4				
Melbourne Knights	1-2				•	1-2	0-3	3-2	0-1	2-0					
Wollongong Wolves	0-1				0-4	2-1	•	1-1	1-2						
Adelaide City	2-0		0-1	1-4	3-0	1-1	•	1-0							
Brisbane Strikers		1-2	2-2	1-0	2-3	1-1	0-1	•							3-2
Sydney United		4-1	1-3	2-1	1-0	2-1		•						1-1	0-2
Canberra Cosmos		0-5	1-5	0-3	0-2				•				1-3	1-2	1-2
South Melbourne		3-1	1-2	4-4							•	2-1	1-1	2-0	3-5
Gippsland Falcons		0-0	0-3								1-2	•	1-0	2-1	0-0
Adelaide Sharks		4-1								3-1	1-1	0-1	•	3-1	0-4
Newcastle Breakers								1-1	2-1	0-2	1-2	1-3	•	1-2	
Marconi Fairfield								2-3	2-0	2-1	5-3	0-0	4-0	2-1	•

OTHER ROUND 8

MATCHES THIS WEEKEND:

Sunday - Sydney Olympic v Newcastle at Belmore Oval 5.30pm
 Sunday - Wollongong v Canberra at Brandon Pk 5.00pm
 Sunday - Melbourne Knights v South Melbourne
 Sunday - Perth v Adelaide Sharks
 Sunday - Carlton v Gippsland Falcons
 Sunday - Adelaide City v Sydney United
 BYE - Marconi Fairfield

ATTENDANCES

Round 3: 31,828 (1998/99)

Round 3: 28,214 (1997/98)

CUMULATIVE:

1998/99: 310,829

1997/98: 254,800

Up: 56,029

NORTHERN SPIRIT NEXT GAME:

Sunday Dec 6, 5.00pm v Sydney United at Edensor Park (Delayed telecast Optus Vision)

NORTHERN SPIRIT NEXT HOME GAME:

Sunday December 27th 7.30pm, v Gippsland Falcons at North Sydney Oval

Ericsson Cup Round 7 Results

Ericsson Cup table:	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Perth Glory	7	6	1	0	18	5	19
Marconi Fairfield	7	5	1	1	17	8	16
Sydney United	7	4	1	2	11	9	13
South Melbourne	7	3	2	2	16	14	11
Carlton	7	3	1	3	17	10	10
Adelaide Sharks	6	3	1	2	11	9	10
Adelaide City	6	3	1	2	8	6	10
Sydney Olympic	7	3	1	3	12	12	10
Northern Spirit	6	3	0	3	5	8	9
Brisbane Strikers	7	2	2	3	10	11	8
Gippsland Falcons	6	2	2	2	4	6	8
Melbourne Knights	6	2	0	4	7	10	6
Wollongong Wolves	6	1	2	3	5	10	5
Newcastle Breakers	6	1	1	4	6	11	4
Canberra Cosmos	7	0	0	7	4	22	0

Youth League Table

Northern Division:	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sydney Olympic	7	5	1	1	28	7	16
Newcastle Breakers	6	5	1	-	18	6	16
Northern Spirit	6	5	-	1	11	6	15
Marconi	7	4	2	1	29	5	14
AIS	6	4	1	1	22	8	13
QAS	7	4	1	2	15	11	13
NSWIS	4	3	-	1	9	3	9
Wollongong Wolves	4	3	-	1	7	3	9
Northern Spirit Colts	6	2	1	3	13	18	7
Sydney United Colts	7	2	-	5	10	18	6
Sydney United	7	1	2	4	6	13	5
Marconi Colts	5	1	-	4	1	9	3
ACTAS	7	1	-	6	13	30	3
Sydney Oly. Acad.	7	-	2	5	3	22	2
Wol. Wolves Colts	6	-	1	5	2	28	1

Marconi Fairfield 2 (Z Babic 11 min, A Roberts og 77min) def Newcastle Breakers 1 (M Wilson 3 min). Venue: Breakers Stadium. Crowd: 3,323.

Adelaide City 1 (D Mennillo 89 min) def Brisbane Strikers 0. Venue: Suncorp Stadium. Crowd: 5,066.

South Melbourne 4 (M Cureija 17min, G Lozanovski 21 min, 32min, V Coveny 45min) drew with Carlton SC 4 (J Tricarico 5min, D Cervinski 11min, L Lapsansky 42min, A Vlahos 87min). Venue: Bob Jane Stadium. Crowd: 11,200. Red Card: A Marth (Carlton, 74min).

Perth Glory 3 (S Miller 47min, 61min, V Buljubasic 89min) def Gippsland Falcons 0. Venue: Mobil Park. Crowd: 3,218. Red Card: J Hopkins (Gippsland 76min).

Adelaide Sharks 4 (A Duric 17min, H Thorpe 26min, D Poimer Pen 36min, B Milosevic 43min) def Sydney Olympic 1 (P Cardozo 62min). Venue: Hindmarsh Stadium. Crowd: 3,120.

Sydney United 2 (M Sterjovski 46min, 77min) def Wollongong Wolves 1 (S Petrovski 72min). Venue: Edensor Park. Crowd: 4,026.

Melbourne Knights 2 (H Karl 30min, I Kelic 41min) def Canberra Cosmos 0. Venue: Knights Stadium. Crowd: 1,875.

LEADING GOALSCORERS:

• 6-Mile Sterjovski (Sydney United) • 5-Brad Maloney (Marconi) • 5-Vaughan Coveny (South Melbourne)
 • 4-Damian Mori (Adelaide C) • 4-Francis Awaritefe (Marconi)

NORTHERN SPIRIT GOALSCORERS:

• 2-Mark Rudan • 1-Kresimir Marusic
 • 1-Daniel Watkins • 1-Robbie Slater

YOUTH LEAGUE

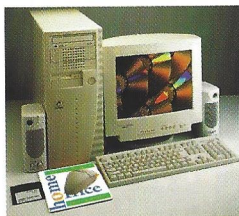
Northern Division Results:

QAS 1 Marconi Fairfield Colts 0,
 Sydney Olympic 7 Wollongong
 Wolves Colts 0, Wollongong
 Wolves 2 Sydney United 1, AIS 6
 Sydney Olympic Academy 0,
 Northern Spirit Colts 3 Sydney
 United Colts 2, NSWIS 2 ACTAS 1.

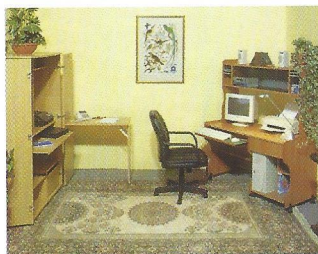
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BRISBANE READY TO STRIKE

Don't look too hard at the Ericsson Cup table, you might be lulled into a false sense of security.

Tonight's visitors, Brisbane Strikers, are a better team than their position indicates. Former Socceroo great John Kosmina has been tearing his hair out in frustration at his team's inability to convert their dominance into results. Indeed there is a legitimate argument that in each of their three losses to date, the Strikers should have shared the points.

A comical own goal from Chris Zoricich bought them undone against Sydney Olympic, and defeats against the Melbourne Knights and Adelaide City (last weekend) both came after conceding goals in the final minute. The Strikers believe that sooner or later their luck will turn.

Kosmina, of course, is no stranger to these parts, having coached Warringah Dolphins to their first and only NSW Super League championship, and having spent a season playing amateur football for Mosman at the tail end of his playing career.

Kosmina also knows all about the strengths and

weaknesses of the Spirit, and remains quietly confident that tonight will signal a change in fortunes.

One player desperate to help him achieve that aim is striker Andy Harper, born and raised on the north shore, and a home owner in the northern beaches. Harper had hoped to be wearing the colours of the Spirit, but it wasn't to be. He returns tonight looking for a goal for the Strikers instead.

Those who have watched their games this season appreciate how well Brisbane have been playing. Midfielder Jeromy Harris has been a revelation alongside another exciting young talent, Kasey Wehrman, flanker Sean Cranney is gradually getting back to full fitness, while goalkeeper Clint Bolton has finally added consistency to his game.

Spirit coach Graham Arnold needs no reminding of what a tough task he is faced with, but the bye last weekend has served to re-focus his team. Indeed after such a whirlwind start to the campaign, the timing of the break could hardly have been better.

With the benefit of some inside information provided by injured Spirit flankman Troy Cranney, who won the championship with Brisbane two seasons ago, Arnold has worked on a game plan to get the Spirit up. Expect more time on the field for talented youngster Daniel Watkins, while Clayton Zane's run of outs in front of goal cannot last much longer. Significantly, playmaker Kresimir Marusic produced his best performance of the season in the last match against Adelaide City, suggesting the service to the front runners is about to improve.

Of equal importance to the Spirit is to make the most of home ground advantage. The next match at North Sydney Oval is not scheduled until after Christmas, and Arnold has reminded his players of the need for maximum points tonight.

* Michael Cockerill is a sportswriter for The Sydney Morning Herald and a commentator for Optus Vision.

BY MICHAEL COCKERILL

northern
spirit
The Spirit of the Game

E-mail: contact@northernspirit.com.au • Web site: www.northernspirit.com.au

SPIRIT READY for early Glory

If there is one club in Australia that the Northern Spirit have reason to respect, even envy, it is Perth Glory. For they are the template for the future of the national league.

Now in their third season in the competition, the Glory look to have finally found the missing piece of the jigsaw. A winning team.

For the past two seasons under former coach Gary Marocchi, Perth struggled on the field.

Big name players were bought, but failed to live up to expectations. The recruitment of Nigerian International Samson Siasia was a case in point.

Siasia looked to be the perfect choice in every respect - a big name, a marketable figure, and a striker with an international reputation for scoring goals. But in 22 appearances he scored just three times, and didn't offer enough outside the penalty area to make up the deficit.

It was a bold gamble, but one which clearly didn't pay off. A compatriot, Peter Anosike, was even less effective.

Yet if the Glory spent their first two seasons in the Ericsson Cup wondering how to get things right on the field, it didn't dampen the enthusiasm for the club off the pitch.

In their debut season, the club averaged over 11,200 per game, and last season went even better, pulling an average of 14,700 to their picturesque Perth Oval.

Given the heightened expectations, not least from the club's colourful chairman Nick Tana, Marocchi's departure during the off-season was

somewhat inevitable. In his place came experienced German coach Bernd Stange, and a South African assistant, Mich d'Avray.

With so many gifted Australian coaches out of work, the decision to go off-shore was widely condemned. But so far Tana is having the last laugh at his critics. The Glory currently sit on top of the league, are undefeated in the process, and their crowds have grown even bigger.

Perth Ovals' 18,000 capacity is tested each time they play at home, and the club wants to hire the 40,000-capacity Subiaco Oval if it makes the finals for the first time. Long-term,

a purpose-built stadium in the inner city is past the drawing board stage.

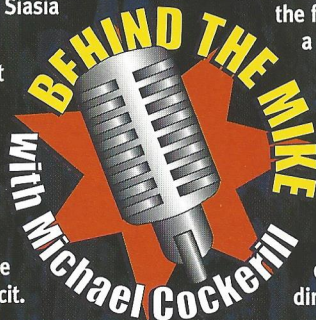
The Glory, clearly, are a success story in every sense. And not only are they the role model for the rest of the NSL, but the NRL, AFL, NBL and rugby union are casting envious eyes in their direction.

Spirit chairman Remo Nogarotto makes no secret of his admiration for what the Glory have achieved. Nor does he hide the fact that he wants to copy many of their strategies.

Certainly the Spirit aim to capture a similar market, have similar policies regarding the team, and share similar problems regarding their home ground.

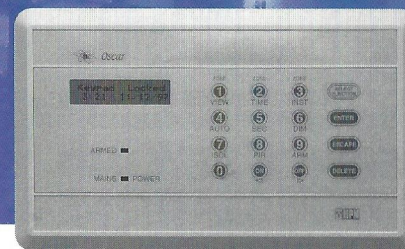
The one difference is that Graham Arnold and his team don't want to wait three seasons before they make the finals. And that, as we know, is the hardest part of the equation.

* Michael Cockerill is a sportswriter for The Sydney Morning Herald and a commentator for Optus Vision.



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NORTHERN SPIRIT v BRISBANE STRIKERS

NORTH SYDNEY OVAL

FRIDAY November 6, 7.30PM

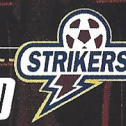
COLOURS: White, red & maroon trim



SPIRIT SQUAD

1	John PEROSH
2	Nicholas PURDUE
3	Eddy BOSNAR
4	Ian CROOK
5	Mark RUDAN
6	Luke CASSERLY
7	Kresimir MARUSIC
8	Robbie SLATER
9	Graham ARNOLD
10	Gabriel MENDEZ
11	Troy CRANNEY
12	James STUBBS-MILLS
13	Philip MOSS
14	Tony PERINICH
15	Scott OLLERENSHAW
16	Daniel WATKINS
17	Paul BILOKAPIC
18	Paul WEARNE
19	Clayton ZANE
20	Peter BLAZINCIC
21	Michael CUNICO
22	Paul HENDERSON
23	Matthew LANGDON
25	Robert ENES

COLOURS: Blue & Yellow



STRIKERS' SQUAD

1	Clint BOLTON
2	Glenn GWYNNE
3	Matthew BELL
4	Chris ZORICICH
5	Craig WILLIAMS
6	Stephen LAYBUTT
7	Andy HARPER
8	Sean CRANNEY
9	Reece TOLLENAERE
10	Kasey WEHRMAN
11	Glenn KOLPAK
12	Jade NORTH
13	
14	Wayne KNIPE
15	Wayne SRHOJ
16	Chay HEWS
17	Jeromy HARRIS
18	Nick MEREDITH
19	Royce BROWNLIE
20	Daniel DUKE
21	Andrew PACKER
22	Aaron THIESFIELD